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Senator Kuipers Announces Support for Merit Preservation Plan

Roundtable Events to be Conducted across the State, Web site Launched

(LANSING) – State Senator Wayne Kuipers, R-Holland, today announced his support to preserve vital funding for the Michigan Merit Award Scholarship. The scholarship rewards academic achievement and makes post-secondary education more affordable for Michigan families.

“It is pivotal for the Administration to understand how important the Merit Award Scholarship is to students and families across the state,” Kuipers, chair of the Senate Education Committee, said. “The Senate Republican Caucus has drawn our line in the sand over this issue, and we will fight with every aspiring student in Michigan for the funding to remain at its current level.”

Beginning this week, Senate Republicans will conduct roundtable events with impacted families and students, local school board officials, educators and higher education representatives. The first meeting was conducted Monday, May 12 on the Royal Oak campus of Oakland Community College, with future meetings to take place in Grand Rapids and Midland.

Senator Kuipers also announced the launch of the Senate Republicans’ Merit Awards Preservation Plan Web site. The page includes links for statistics, testimonials from students and families, and a link for residents to voice their opinions. The page can be located at <http://www.senate.state.mi.us/gop/merit>.

The Merit scholarship not only helps middle-class working families afford a college education for their children, it is also the only state award that recognizes and rewards hard work and accomplishments regardless of where a student lives. In the past two years alone, over 140,000 Michigan families have benefited from the scholarship.

The scholarship also keeps the promise Senator Kuipers and Republicans have made to working families and college-bound students: work hard, stay in school, get good grades and good test scores and we will reward you by contributing to the cost of a college or vocational education.

In addition to contributing to tuition costs, the scholarship also provides support for textbooks and miscellaneous educational expenses, transportation, rental or purchase of a personal computer, reasonable

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room and board, dependent day care, disability-related expenses – including special services, personal assistance, materials, equipment and supplies.

The Merit Preservation Plan, as supported by Senator Kuipers, is an effort to recognize and reward the state's hardworking young people – the future job providers, educators and healthcare providers. Attracting and keeping those young people in Michigan will only produce greater benefits for generations to come.

As Michigan's graduating high school seniors commence to the next stage of their educational career, many will benefit from the scholarship. Senator Kuipers has announced his steadfast support for the Merit Preservation Plan, and is willing to fight for every student who has worked for the award.